Improving Vocabulary Mastery of Junior High School Students by Watching Digital Storytelling

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ABSTRAK

Mempelajari kosakata menjadi salah satu tantangan dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Memilih media yang tepat akan membantu siswa untuk mendapatkan kata-kata baru. Memanfaatkan cerita yang diunggah ke dalam aplikasi digital dalam mempelajari kosakata dapat membantu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah Voicethread sebagai media penyampaian cerita meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa SMP dan untuk mengetahui persepsi siswa terhadap digital storytelling untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian eksperimen dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kuantitatif. Ada pre-test dan post-test untuk mencari peningkatan jumlah kosakata baru. Juga, ada kuesioner untuk mengetahui persepsi siswa menggunakan Voicethread dalam pembelajaran kosakata. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kosakata siswa meningkat. Siswa memberikan respon positif terhadap penggunaan digital storytelling dan merekomendasikan penggunaan digital storytelling dalam pembelajaran kosakata. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa digital storytelling berpengaruh terhadap motivasi belajar mandiri.

Kata kunci: Digital Storytelling, Pembelajaran Kosakata, Sekolah Menengah Pertama.

ABSTRACT

Learning vocabulary becomes one of the challenges in language learning. Choosing the right media will help the student to gain new words. Utilizing stories uploaded into digital applications in learning vocabulary can be helpful. This study aims to seek whether Voicethread as the media delivering story improves vocabulary mastery of junior high school students and to find students' perception of digital storytelling to improve vocabulary mastery. This research is experimental research using quantitative descriptive methods. There are pre-test and post-test to seek the increasing number of new vocabulary. Also, there is a questionnaire to find the students' perception of using Voicethread in vocabulary learning. The result of the study reveals that students' vocabulary increased. The students give positive responses to the use of digital storytelling and recommend using digital storytelling in vocabulary learning. The result also indicates that digital storytelling influences motivation to study independently.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Vocabulary learning, Junior High School.

BACKGROUND

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental thing for the language learner in second language learning as it reflects the learner's understanding of the language. Vocabulary mastery refers to the person's ability to recognize and express the meaning of the words (Hiebert & Michale L, 2005, as cited in Dalimunthe & Haryadi, 2022). Vocabulary mastery is essential in the teaching of L2 in any language skill. Viera (2017) states that vocabulary helps comprehend written and spoken texts, which is the action or capability to understand particular things. As well as that, vocabulary mastery is a necessary thing in learning a second language.

Vocabulary is not only the most crucial aspect in understanding and utilizing English correctly, but also it is the language aspect in which most students make mistakes (Segler et al., 2002). Even though acquiring vocabulary is essential in contributing to effective language acquisition, vocabulary learning has been less emphasized in the teaching and learning process. Students are expected to self-acquire vocabulary through their efforts (de Groot, 2006; Jo, 2018; Z. Zakaria, 2005; Zimmerman, 1997). As a result, there is no focus that was placed on vocabulary mastery in the language classroom.

Learning vocabulary becomes one of the numerous issues or challenges that English language learner's experience. As Nation (2013) points out, learners' inability to be skilled and competent vocabulary users makes it difficult to acquire the language properly. In addition, a study conducted by Hasan & Selamat (2017) found that vocabulary activity was placed fourth out of nine activities which are utilized to evaluate the language frequency activities in ESL classes. Moreover, Teh (2004) revealed that vocabulary practice was identified as one of the students' least popular learning activities. However, in Malaysia, students showed a strong concern to learn vocabulary using digital technology in the classroom of ESL (Mustafa et al., 2012; Ali et al., 2012). In consequence, even though vocabulary learning is one of the big obstacles, it can be resolved with the person's interest to help themselves in learning vocabulary.

The vocabulary teaching and learning process, on the other hand, has never been easy. It is, in fact, quite difficult for both educators and students. As a result, choosing a suitable technique is vital in teaching vocabulary to junior high school learners in the learning process. In her book, Halliwell (1992) identified that the essential thing in vocabulary teaching is to select the appropriate technique, method, or strategy. Therefore, there are many techniques, methods, or strategies in teaching vocabularies, such as drama and song. Demircioğlu (2010), in her study, states that using drama in teaching vocabulary creates supportive intellectual and emotional environments that encourage students to think. Drama as a teaching approach enhances long-term language retention. Another research that was conducted by Kurnia (2017) showed that using English songs increases learners' vocabulary mastery. According to the findings of her study, using songs can help learners improve their vocabulary mastery and self-confidence. Apart from the previously mentioned technique, one method that helps junior high school students master vocabulary is by using stories.

Stories are considered a loved tool for second language learning. Stories offer students personal benefits in a comfortable environment that decreases stresses and anxieties. Also, it is leading to more successful language acquisition. A researcher suggests that using approaches that provide joy for students could increase the student's interest in the learning activity (Joan Kang Shin, 2006). Other researchers revealed inline results. The learning activity becomes an enjoyable process in a motivating setting, and students can exercise their imagination and creativity (Halliwell, 1992). In addition, learners can appreciate various cultures and customs (Met & Garvie, 1991). Research conducted by Kalantari & Hashemian (2015) shows that using a story-based approach can make learners more interested in learning the L2. In conclusion, using the story-based, which gives joy, can be a suitable method for vocabulary mastery.

The story may be combined with modern technology and can be used as a tool for learning. It is called Digital Storytelling. It is one of the utensils which is available on the market for language learning. In the practice, Digital storytelling affects the students' vocabulary mastery. Sulistianingsih & Aflahatun (2020) revealed that digital storytelling effectively increased EFL learners' vocabulary, making them happy, relaxed, motivated, and assured during the learning process. For EFL learners, digital storytelling based on a computer is an influential activity in learning vocabulary that can help them expand their vocabulary. Moreover, digital storytelling also brings improvement to the student's English language skills. Leong & Zainol Abidin (2018) investigate the effect of utilizing digital storytelling in language learning. The findings demonstrated that digital storytelling based on tablets positively impacts ESL students in learning English words.

Research on digital storytelling in improving the vocabulary mastery of junior high school students is needed to be conducted. This study uses the integration of storytelling and modern technology. The Researcher used voicethred.com as the platform for listening, recording the story and submitting the story with visualization. The utilizing of modern technology is an advancement in education and is a more effective method. Hereafter, this research drives to investigate the effect of digital storytelling on vocabulary mastery for junior high school students.

This study aims to answer the research questions as follows: (1) is there any improvement in using digital storytelling in junior high school students' vocabulary mastery? (2) What are students' perspectives on using digital storytelling in junior high school students' vocabulary mastery?

This study attempts to seek the students' numbers of the gained vocabulary or words before and after the treatment to recognize the improvement indicated by the increasing number of vocabulary. The research will compare two groups which are the Experimental Group (EG) and the Control Group (CG). The experimental group uses digital storytelling, and the control group uses paper-based stories, which are not given any special treatment. Therefore, the scope and limitation of the study are limited to the junior high school students as the subject and the result of using digital storytelling in vocabulary mastery as the object of research.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is experimental research using quantitative descriptive methods with the stages of data collection and then interpretation before producing final data. This study used a Paired sample t-test design. This research design started with preparations, pre-test, treatments, post-test, questionnaire, and evaluation of the data.

The population of this study is 310 students in grade 8th in one of the public junior high schools in Sidoarjo, consisting of ten classes. The subject are chosen because the K13 curriculum contained basic competence in a recount text in the junior high school 8th grade. The students are familiar with the technology. Based on the preliminary research, the student is facilitated with a computer laboratory connected to internet access. Also, the student always brings their smartphone to the classroom during the teaching and learning process. Thus, the research is possible to be conducted in the classroom.

The Researcher collaborated with the teacher to set the participant and the material in the preparation. The research sample is two classes consisting of 20 students in each class or 40 students in total. The mean of the English subject score is the consideration to pick the sample. The chosen two classes have similar mean scores in English subjects. The classes are labeled with experimental group (EG) and control group (CG). The EG is given the treatments during the research, and the control group is not given any special treatment.

The Researcher and the teacher, in collaboration, also prepared the assignment and the material. Three recount texts are prepared and made into a digital story delivered using the online platform named Voicethread. Voicethread is an online platform that provides some features that support its users to create their own digital stories such as composing a story on the cloud, uploading audios, clips, and pictures, commenting on others' stories, and sharing options to the public or private. After the stories are uploaded, students from EG are instructed to download and sign up to create an account to access the stories. Further instruction will be informed at the beginning of the treatment.

Before executing the treatment, the experimental and control groups participated in the pre-test to measure their level of vocabulary mastery. The test was held in the first meeting in the classroom. The instruction of the test is presented using Microsoft PowerPoints (PPT) and displayed using the LCD projector. Also, the PPT displays the QR code using their smartphone to access the link of the test on Google Form. The participants were not allowed to open dictionaries or their notes to measure their vocabulary mastery.

The test was a vocabulary test consisting of 60 words that were contained in the prepared stories. Each number had four options. The participants were instructed to

choose one of the answer options that had the closest meaning to the words. The words included in the test are nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

Table 1. Vocabulary List

Noun	Adjective	Verb
1. Place	21. Decide	41. Ready
2. Hotel	22. Plan	42. Busy
3. Foreigner	23. See	43. Quiet
4. City	24. Go	44. Pure
5. Permission	25. Join	45. Bad
6. People	26. Stay	46. Far
7. Street	27. Spend	47. Beautiful
8. Tree	28. Sunbathe	48. Nice
9. House	29. Enjoy	49. Happy
10. Hill	30. Arrive	50. Unforgettable
11. Scenery	31. Feel	51. Old
12. Air	32. Take	52. Small
13. Water	33. Buy	53. Light
14. Forest	34. Surrender	54. Easy
15. Moment	35. Begin	55. Sad
16. Request	36. Give	56. Narrow
17. Field	37. Realize	57. Slippery
18. Direction	38. Try	58. Nervous
19. Ability	39. Run	59. Angry
20. Accident	40. Lose	60. Proud

After the pre-test, both groups are given treatment in separate classrooms. The activity goes as the lesson plan made by the teacher according to the schedule of the English subject. The experimental group uses digital storytelling as the media of the contextual materials. During the class, the QR code is displayed on the whiteboard using an LCD projector. The students are instructed to scan the code to open the stories on the Voicethread app. They are expected to watch stories on the platform and write down unfamiliar words. Then, there are reading comprehension questions. The Researcher expects that students quickly gain new vocabulary because there are visualizations while the story is being told. The treatments are three meetings with one story each meeting.

On the other side, the control group use a paper-based story and do the same activity as the EG. After the test, students are given a sheet of paper. There is a story

on the paper. The students are expected to read the story and write the unfamiliar words. Then, students are answering the reading comprehension questions. This stage took three meetings with one story in each meeting

The next stage is the post-test. This test contains the same question as to the pre-test. In the beginning, PPT contains a QR code of the link to the Google Form test displayed. The student is instructed to scan and open the test. The test is 30 minutes long and contains 60 questions. The students are not allowed to open dictionaries or notes. This test measures the participant's vocabulary mastery.

For the experimental group, there is a questionnaire to be answered. The questionnaire is distributed after the post-test. This questionnaire would answer the second research question. There were 10 questions on the Likert scale about students' experience during the implementation of digital storytelling in vocabulary mastery. The questionnaire is using Google Form on the Likert scale and consists of testimonials from which participants can select to rate their answers to evaluative questions. There are five points as follows: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree.

Table 2. Questionnaire

No.	Question	Answer
(Q1)	I've used Voicethread before.	(Yes/No)
(Q2)	Voicethread is easy to use in vocabulary mastery.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q3)	Voicethread's interface looks friendly.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q4)	I operate the Voicethread without the help of others.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q5)	I can easily adapt to learning using Voicethread.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q6)	I find it helpful to learn Narrative Text material with Voicethread.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q7)	The material presented with Voicethread helps in increasing my vocabulary.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q8)	I am more interested in learning using Voicethread than usual learning.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q9)	I will recommend Voicethread to be a learning medium.	(1;2;3;4;5)
(Q10)	I will use voicethread.com for self-study.	(1;2;3;4;5)

The final stage was analyzing the result. The data were analyzed to know the result after the treatment was implemented. To know the difference, the Researcher compared the results of both groups' results of both tests. The result of the paired-sample t-test compared to the t table to know whether the treatment brings an improvement or not. The result data are processed by utilizing the SPSS statistic program.

DISCUSSIONS
Digital Storytelling Improves Vocabulary Mastery
Based on the test, the following result can be drawn:

Table 3. Paired Sample Statistic

	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Sum	1277	1402	1250	1342
N	20	20	20	20
Mean	63.85	70.10	62.50	67.10
Std. Deviation	14.568	14.764	16.823	14.323
Std. Error Mean	3.258	3.301	3.762	3.203

The increase of the EG's total score (1277) is higher than CG's score (1402). The difference between the total scores of the pre-test and post-test is 125, which means that there is an increased score of the EG. On the other side, CG got a total pre-test score of 1250 and a post-test of 1342. The difference between the total scores of both tests is 92, which means that there is an increased score of the CG.

There was an increase in the average score of EG (63.85) and CG (70.10). The difference between the pre-test and post-test of the EG is 6.25. On the other hand, CG obtained an average pre-test score of 62.50 and an average post-test score of 67.10. The difference between both tests of CG is 4.60. Both groups have the improvement, but EG's are higher than CG's.

Table 3 also shows the standard deviation of the EG pre-test (14.568) and post-test (14.764). On the other hand, the standard deviation of both tests of CG is 16.823 for the pre-test and 14.323 for the post-test. For the standard error mean, EG's pre-test and post-test obtained 3.258 and 3.301 while CG obtained 3.762 (pre-test) and 3.203 (post-test).

The collected data then are input to the SPSS statistic program to be analyzed and compared with the paired samples of both groups.

From the SPSS program, the following result can be drawn:

Table 4. Paired Sample Test

			EG	CG
			Pre-test - Post-test	Pre-test - Post-test
Paired Differences	Mean		-6.250	-4.600
	Std. Deviation		9.684	11.767
	Std. Error Mean		2.165	2.631
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-10.782	-10.107
		Upper	-1.718	.907
t			-2.886	-1.748
df			19	19
Sig. (2-tailed)			.009	.097

This study used the 95% confidence interval of the difference, which means the alpha value is 0.05.

From table 4, the P-value of the EG is 0.009, which is lower than the alpha value ($\alpha=0.05$). Meanwhile, the P-value of the CG was 0.97, which is higher than the alpha value ($\alpha=0.05$). Thus, the use of digital storytelling brought an adequate difference to the experimental group, while the paper-based story did not bring any adequate difference.

Based on the results of research data, EG's score increased by an average of 6.25. This shows that the number of vocabulary that students know has increased. The use of digital storytelling can help in improving vocabulary mastery. Thus, the result of this study was in line with previous studies (Har et al., 2019; Leong & Zainol Abidin, 2018; Sulistianingsih & Aflahatun, 2020; Tajer et al., 2017; M. A. Zakaria & Aziz, 2019) which revealed that increasing EFL students' vocabulary is effective by using digital storytelling. Digital storytelling helped students gain new vocabulary through the audiovisual story. The students easily gain words by knowing the pictorial form of the word.

Students' Perception of Digital Storytelling

Besides the tests, EG were required to fill out the questionnaire to know their point of view on using the Voicethread platform as the medium of delivering the story.

The questionnaire was brought after the Experimental group's post-test. It contained 10 questions. The questions were already listed in Table 2. Questionnaires. The questions were about the students' experience of using the Voicethread platform. The questionnaire was delivered on the Likert scale using Google Form.

From the questionnaire data, the following result can be drawn:

Table 5. Questionnaire Result

No.		Yes	No			
1	I've used Voicethread before.	5	15			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	Voicethread is easy to use in vocabulary mastery.	0	1	7	10	2
3	Voicethread's interface looks friendly.	0	1	7	11	1
4	I operate the Voicethread without the help of others.	0	1	10	5	4
5	I can easily adapt to learning using Voicethread.	0	1	10	7	2
6	I find it helpful to learn to Recount Text material with Voicethread.	0	0	10	8	2
7	The material presented with Voicethread helps in increasing my vocabulary.	0	0	6	12	2

8	I am more interested in learning using Voicethread than usual learning.	0	3	12	4	1
9	I will recommend Voicethread to be a learning medium.	0	1	11	7	1
10	I will use voicethread.com for self-study.	0	1	10	8	1

This Voicethread application is a new thing for students in learning. This is shown in table 5 which states that 15 out of 20 students have never used Voicethread before. Although the majority of this is a new thing, students feel they can operate Voicethread easily without the help of others because the user interface of this application is very user-friendly. This is shown in questionnaires numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5. In the table, students who stated a neutral attitude tended to agree with the statement. So, Voicethread is an application that has a friendly interface and is easy to use so that students who are less familiar with these apps can use it without any problems.

In addition, the app is believed to be able to help students in learning to recount text material because it can make it easier for them to learn new vocabulary through audiovisuals. This is shown in the students' answers in table 5 numbers 6 and 7, they stated that they were neutral and tended to agree that Voicethread helped them in mastering new vocabulary. Through audiovisual, Voicethread helps students in mastering vocabulary that students have never known.

After implementing digital storytelling in the classroom, students feel more interested and recommend Voicethread as a learning medium. This is shown in table statements number 8 and 9 which state that a neutral attitude tends to agree. In addition, students also feel that they will even use it in independent learning. This is shown in number 10, where students express an attitude that tends to agree.

By using it in independent learning, it can be seen that students get motivated in learning. It is in line with Hava (2019), who has explored the digital storytelling's role in the motivation and satisfaction of the student in EFL learning. The researchers discovered that digital storytelling help students improve their English vocabulary. Moreover, the digital storytelling with the convenience offered by these apps, students will easily be able to increase the number of vocabulary mastered. From the answers to the questionnaire, some students considered that utilizing digital storytelling increased the students' enthusiasm for using the new method for independent learning. It can be seen from the response to question number 10, which tends to be positive. Students will use Voicethread for self-study.

CONCLUSION

Voicethread as a digital storytelling medium to improve the vocabulary mastery of junior high school students is an easy-to-use application. Students can operate the apps well without any help from others because of the user-friendly interface. The digitalized stories uploaded to Voicethread contain visualized words from the stories. They influence the feasibility and effectiveness of learning new words.

The use of digital storytelling improves the students' vocabulary mastery. The findings exposed that the EG improved their vocabulary mastery and indicated the number of vocabulary increased on the post-test. Using digital storytelling can help

students improve their vocabulary mastery and motivate them to learn English. Furthermore, the findings of this study will provide a variety of teaching media to overcome the students' difficulties in expanding their English vocabulary.

Based on the above-mentioned fact, raciolinguistics needs to be considered as a way to educate Indonesian people regarding language racism so that they know how to avoid committing racist actions through language. The presence of the Center for Race, Ethnic and Language Studies in Indonesia whose members are from multidisciplinary fields is very urgent and relevant to introduce raciolinguistics. The challenge to promote raciolinguistics in Indonesia is indeed very big, but it must be overcome for the sake of national integrity.

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